

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8422

INFO AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

UNCLAS GABORONE 1336

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SEDU, BC

SUBJECT: BOTSWANA UNIVERSITY CAMPUS APPEAL (BUCA)

SUMMARY: A CAMPAIGN IS UNDERWAY IN BOTSWANA TO RAISE R1 MILLION BY SEPTEMBER FOR THE GABORONE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. THIS REMARKABLE CAMPAIGN HAS ALREADY RAISED OVER R400,000. EMBASSY REQUESTS AUTHORITY TO PLEDGE TRANSITION TRANCHE OF AMBASSADOR'S SELF-HELP FUND TO BUCA. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT KHAMA HAS BEEN TOURING BOTSWANA OVER PAST FEW WEEKS TO PROMOTE BUCA, THROUGH WHICH THE GOB IS TRYING TO RAISE ONE MILLION RAND FROM ITS CITIZENS BY SEPTEMBER. THE PURPOSE OF THE EFFORT IS TO EXPAND THE GABORONE CAMPUS FOLLOWING THE BREAKUP OF UBLS IN OCTOBER 1975. KHAMA LAUNCHED BUCA IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR WITH A SPEECH BEFORE PARLIAMENT IN WHICH HE IDENTIFIED THE CAMPAIGN'S MOST IMMEDIATE AIMS AS PROVIDING SCIENCE FACILITIES, DORMITORY AND KITCHEN FACILITIES AND STAFF HOUSING AND OFFICE SPACE. EACH MOTSWANA IS BEING ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE IN CASH OR KIND IN ORDER TO BUILD A NATIONAL UNIVERSITY CAPABLE OF TURNING OUT THE SKILLED MANPOWER TO ALLOW DESIRED LOCALIZATION. AS A RESULT OF THIS MASSIVE CAMPAIGN, THE PREISNE SIAD, "PEOPLE WHO USUALLY GIVE AID WILL TAKE US MORE SERIOUSLY BECAUSE OF OUR EFFORTS TO HLEP OURSELVES." ACCORDING TO A PRESS RELEASE

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FROM POTLAK MOLFE, BUCA COORDINATOR, OTHER IMPORTANT

NEEDS ARE A LANGUAGE LAB, CLASSROOMS, SPECIAL TEACHING ROOMS, AND BOOKS FOR THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY.

2. BY ANY STANDARDS, THIS MASSIVE FUND-RAISING CAMPAIGN IS ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE EVER UNDERTAKEN. AS OF JULY 1, DONATIONS AND PLEDGES STAND AT OVER R400,000, AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY FOR A NATION OF UNDER THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILLION PEOPLE WITH AN ANNUAL PER CAPITA INCOME OF ABOUT R280. MOST BOTSWANA DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE CASH ECONOMY AND COUNT WEALTH IN TERMS OF LIVESTOCK, PRIMARILY CATTLE. THIS HAS LED TO BUCA'S SLOGAN OF "ONE MAN, ONE BEAST" AND HAS RESULTED IN MUCH OF THE CAMPAIGN'S RECEIPTS' BEING IN CATTLE. ACCORDING TO MOLEFHE, EVEN EXTREMELY POOR VILLAGERS WHO HAVE ONLY A DIM CONCEPT OF WHAT A UNIVERSITY IS ARE WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE LIVESTOCK, PRODUCE AND ANYTHING ELSE THEY HAVE.

3. THE CURRENT LEVEL OF DONATION IS EVER MORE IMPRESSIVE WHEN ONE REALIZES THAT THE GOB COULD HAVE EITHER MADE DONATING COMPULSORY OR INCREASED TAXES TO RAISE THE NECESSARY FUNDS. HOWEVER, NOT ONLY HAS PRESIDENT KHAMA REJECTED THESE COURSES, BUT HE HAS EVEN MADE CONTRIBUTIONS NOT TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

4. THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN INSTITUTE (AAI), FOR MANY YEARS A SUPPORTER OF EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER PROGRAMS IN BOTSWANA, HAS ESTABLISHED A SPECIAL FUND IN SUPPORT OF BUCA. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FUND ARE TAX-EXEMPT AND SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED.

5. IN LIGHT OF THE MAJOR SELF-HELP EFFORT THAT BUCA REPRESENTS AND IN VIEW OF HOW CRUCIAL THE UNIVERSITY IS TO THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF BOTSWANA, THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING AUTHORITY TO GIVE OR PLEDGE THE TRANSITION TRANCHE OF THE AMBASSADOR'S SELF-HELP FUND TO BUCA. IT IS POSSIBLE TO TIE SUCH A DONATION TO A SPECIFIC PROJECT WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY SUCH AS EQUIPPING A SCIENCE LAB. IF NECESSARY, A PROJECT PROPOSAL CAN BE DRAWN UP. PLEASE ADVISE

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